

The Board of Treasury, on the motion of the Honorable Mr. Howell, of the 8th July instant, beg leave to report

The Board of Treasury, on Motion of the Honorable Mr. Howell, of the 8th July instant, beg leave to REPORT,

THAT the settlement of the accounts of the several states with the United States, is in their opinion an object of the greatest magnitude; and that a longer delay in making the most efficacious arrangement for attaining this end, will tend to destroy the harmony of the union, and blast all hopes of collecting a general revenue, in any degree adequate to the exigencies of government.

That the commissioners appointed in the several states for this purpose, are at the same time vested with powers to settle with individuals.

That the accounts of scarcely any state having been exhibited to the commissioners, and the claims of individuals most urgent for settlement, no commencement has been made in the examination of the accounts of any state, (so far as has come to the knowledge of this board) except those of Connecticut.

That altho' the powers vested by Congress in the said commissioners, for settling accounts with individuals, are as extensive as a regard to the public security can possibly admit of, (it being in the option of the commissioner, where vouchers are not produced, to permit the claimant to substantiate his demand on oath) embarrassment and delays have unavoidably arisen in the execution of this truth, owing in a great degree to the caution, which a faithful officer will ever exercise in disposing, on his mere judgment, of the property of the public.

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That this principle would inevitably operate in a far more powerful degree in liquidating the accounts of the several states with the United States; from the magnitude and complicated nature of the accounts, the defect in numerous instances of general principles of settlement and the impracticability of substantiating the claims of a state, (where no vouchers are produced) in the same manner with those of individuals.

That in the opinion of this board, it would be inconsistent with those principles of equality, which ought to govern in the settlement of the accounts of the individual states with the United States, to vest the commissioners with those extensive powers in settling the accounts of the state, which they have a right to exercise in the case of individuals; since a difference of judgment in the commissioners, an inability to resist the influential importunity of the state in which they act, and the limited point of view in which they must necessarily consider those claims, which are not supported by the express resolves of Congress, may so alleviate the burthens of one state at the expence of another, as to introduce a spirit of dissatisfaction, highly injurious to the peace of the confederacy.

That to establish a new commission to settle the account of the state, distinct from those of individuals, would not only burthen the public with a heavy additional expence, but expose the public to the hazard of admitting far greater claims than they ought to be chargeable with; since in numerous instances, great advances have been made by several states to public officers, and claims of individuals against the United States have been assumed, which can no otherwise be checked than by an uniform controul in the settlement of accounts, under the exercise of a single will.

That a very great progress having been made in the settlement of the claims of individuals throughout the states, the commissioners will have more leisure, than they have heretofore had, to take up the state accounts; and that in case of need, an arrangement may be made for proceeding with the remaining accounts of individuals, whilst the attention of the commissioner is devoted to the settlement of the state accounts.

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From these considerations, the result of mature reflection, the board submit to the judgment of Congress the following resolves.

1st. That the commissioners of public accounts in the several states, be directed forthwith to call upon the states, in which they act, for their accounts against the United States, to the first day of January, 1782, and that they devote their unremitted attention to the examination and settlement of the same.

2d. That in the admission of claims, the said commissioners govern themselves by the present existing resolves of Congress, and such others as may be from time to time past, and transmitted them by the board of treasury; and that they take up the said accounts in such order as the said board shall direct.

3d. RESOLVED, That if any state shall neglect to furnish its accounts, supported by proper vouchers, to the commissioner for the space of twelve months after he shall have given notice in writing to the supreme executive, that he is ready to enter on the duties of his office, such state shall be precluded the privilege of a settlement thereof, excepting with the board of treasury; and if in the course of two years after such notice as aforesaid, a complete settlement is not effected, such state shall be considered as having no claim against the United States, but shall nevertheless be chargeable with all advances of money or other articles, which may have been made to such state by the United States, and with its deficiency of the several quotas of taxes, which have been assessed on it.

RESOLVED, That the commissioners of the board of treasury be authorised either to appoint, or to permit an assistant commissioner to be appointed, in such state where the multiplicity of accounts may render it essential to an expeditious settlement, with a salary not exceeding dollars per annum; and that the assistant so appointed having first taken the usual oaths of office, proceed under the direction of the principal commissioner, to settle the accounts of individuals not hitherto liquidated.

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And whereas several states in the union may claim the privilege of charging the United States with sundry expenditures, alledged to be made for the common cause, though not supported by the special acts of Congress; and it being essential to the peace and welfare of the union, that such claims should be adjusted on uniform principles.

RESOLVED, That the several states be called upon to exhibit without delay to the board of treasury, their claims against the United States, under the description above mentioned, with such vouchers, evidence and motives of expenditure, as they may think necessary to support their respective pretensions; and that if any state shall neglect within twelve months to exhibit the same, it shall be precluded from all further privilege of exhibiting accounts, under the description above mentioned.

RESOLVED, That the board of treasury proceed to examine and arrange such accounts as are from time to time exhibited, and that they report to Congress such principles for determining those claims, as they shall judge most consistent with general justice and the public interest.

RESOLVED, That the United States in Congress will, after twelve months, computed from the fifteenth day of August next, take up the merits of all pretensions of the several states, under the description above mentioned.

That the said accounts shall be finally determined on within eighteen months computed from the above date; and the several states after that period, be for ever precluded from all pretension of claims under the above description. ALL WHICH IS HUMBLY SUBMITTED.
SAMUEL OSGOOD, WALTER LIVINGSTON

Mr. Jay